

FORM #94-253
CARR McLEAN, TORONTO

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SOMETHING INTERESTING TO PRACTICAL FARMERS !

AUTUMN IN MANITOBA.

MR. JOHN OGILVIE'S PEN PORTRAIT OF THE COUNTRY AND ITS PEOPLE.

A 350 MILE DRIVE IN 10 DAYS.

WINNIPEG, Aug. 28th, 1885.

To the Editor of the Gazette.

SIR,—Wishing to obtain from actual observation a fair estimate of the condition of the crops in this province, and ascertain by personal conversation with the settlers their opinion of the country and prospects, I left Winnipeg in company with two other gentlemen on the afternoon of the 17th instant and drove up the Red river road, passing the settlements of St. Vital, St. Norbert and St. Agathe on the way to Morris, and was surprised at the amount of crop in what I had hitherto imagined a comparatively uncultivated section of country, and noted particularly the apparently comfortable position a large number of the French Canadian farmers enjoyed. The wheat and oat crops looked very promising, a large hay crop was being stacked and every settler appeared to own a number of live stock. From Morris we drove leisurely to Gretna, passing through the French reserve on the Red river into the Mennonites reserve to the west. The Mennonites are situated in a very fine part of the country lying west from Emerson to the foot of the Pembina mountains and from the C. P. R. southwestern on the north to the boundary line on the south. These people have been very successful since coming to this country and I have never seen one who regrets his coming. A gentleman well acquainted with the settlement pointed out to me a number recently arrived from Dakota. As an instance of the

EXTRAORDINARY INCREASE OF PRODUCTION

in this settlement, take this: The harvest of 1882 was only 32,000 bushels wheat marketed at Gretna station, while at the same station in 1883, the amount was 235,000, and that of last season 320,000 bushels, or ten times that of 1882; a much larger quantity is promised this season. I am only speaking of wheat, and at one station. Besides a larger quantity of flax seed, oats, barley, cattle, hogs and potatoes have been shipped from this station; Emerson, Morris and Morden stations also ship large quantities of the Mennonite produce. From Gretna we drove to Morden, and on every side we found the farmers busy cutting a bountiful crop. Morden is situated at the base of the Pembina mountains, and though only in its infancy shows great signs of thrift and prosperity—no booming, but a steady, solid advance. There are two steam flour mills here, and seven or eight general stores, two grain elevators, two good hotels, and many other evidences of general prosperity. So different are the towns that started

based on common sense after the boom. You can stand in their streets and see and hear the reaper all round you, while the boom towns are laid out in town lots to such a distance that nothing is known of the farming community without driving out to the country. From Morden we drove to Manitou, the former terminus of the C. P. R. S. W. R., passing on our way through the Pembina Mountain country, Thornhill and Darlingford. This is a fine rolling prairie, plenty of water and wood within easy reach, and the crops are excellent. From Manitou we proceeded to Clearwater, via Pilot Mound and Crystal City. Dining at Pilot Mound we certainly enjoyed as comfortable a meal as any hotel in Ontario or Quebec could furnish. We found the graders on the new extension of the C. P. R. S. W. R. hard at work, while the engineers' camps were pushed as far as Clearwater, and farmers are jubilant over the

FACILITY WHICH WILL BE AFFORDED

them for transportation and market for their produce, which heretofore had to be teamed to Manitou across the valley of the Pembina, the banks of which are very steep and about two hundred feet in height. All the way through the crop is simply immense, and I feel certain that thousands of acres will yield forty to forty-five bushels wheat and 100 bushels of oats to the acre, and it is no uncommon occurrence to find farmers with from two to three hundred and some five and six hundred acres of crop. An American gentleman, who accompanied us from Manitou, was amazed at the crops, and said he had seen neither crop nor country like this in his State of Minnesota. At Clearwater the farmers were calling a meeting to take steps for establishing a creamery, and there is plenty of good water and wood in this district. From here we drove to Deloraine via north side of Rock Lake and through the Turtle Mountain country, and for a beautiful, fertile, well watered rolling prairie and magnificent crops (if any in the southern part of Manitoba is better than another), I must give this country the palm. Of course, owing to the distance from railways, farmers have not as large an acreage as farther east, but the large quantity of this year's breaking evidences the faith the farmers have in the prosecution of the work, and all are animated with hope for the future, while the railway company will never regret the extension, as I am satisfied no portion of the road will yield the revenue that must soon flow from southern Manitoba. From Deloraine we struck north to Brandon via Plum creek, slept under a hay stack that night, the 22nd instant; next morning breakfasted

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with a farmer who came to the country four years ago with very little money, and is still 35 miles from market. This man had a fine crop of 150 acres. I counted 50 head of cattle in his corral and twenty hogs; he had built a very fine 2-story frame house this summer, and has nothing, he says, to complain about. Plum creek is

A VERY THRIVING LITTLE VILLAGE,

pleasantly situated on the Pipestone creek; has a water and steam flour mill, good schools and churches, etc. But we hurry on to Brandon, the best town in Manitoba, prettily situated on the banks of the Assiniboine river, high, with clean macadamised streets as good as any town in Ontario. Over half a million bushels of wheat were marketed here during the past season. From Brandon we journeyed to Minnedosa via Rapid City. In the latter place we found what must prove to be one of the greatest of Manitoba's industries, in its infancy—a cheese factory. Clean and well ventilated rooms, with their vats and presses, and a large quantity of cheese drying, made a very pleasing change from the monotony of the golden crops. The manager, Mr. Paterson, told me that while in Ontario it takes eleven pounds of milk to make a pound of cheese, such is the richness of the pasturage that in this country nine and a half pounds is all that is required; and, he added, a cow will give nearly 1/3 more milk here than in Ontario. From Rapid City to Minnedosa, along the valley of the Little Saskatchewan, and, in fact, for miles around, lies one of the richest stock countries I ever saw. The cattle, many of them very fine, all in fine condition, up to their eyes in the richest possible grass, with plenty of water and well sheltered; but I must not delay. From the beautiful Minnedosa valley we drive to Neepawa and across what is known as the big plain to Carberry. This is a well settled plain and generally well farmed. I asked a farmer who was cutting wheat by the roadside, what was his expectation

for the yield; he said 40 bushels at least, and I fully believed him. From Carberry I drove to Portage-la-Prairie. This


MAGNIFICENT FARMING DISTRICT

is too well known to need any description from me, but I must say I have never seen any such acreage or yield as this section bears this season. Farmers are busy cutting in every direction, and the busy implement expert is seen setting up the binders on almost every farm. Now for Winnipeg, 65 miles distant by trail. Down by St. Francois Xavier along the banks of the Assiniboine (largely settled by French Canadians) are some of the prettiest farms in Manitoba, good crops and lots of cattle; in fact, one of the most pleasing features to-day in this country is the large increase of cattle and stock of all kinds; and I must say that although I had heard on my arrival that a large crop was expected, I had not anticipated anything equal to what I have witnessed on my country trip. A magnificent country, bountiful crops, and the general appearance of hope, thrift and prosperity on every hand was more than I bargained for, while I met with no farmer within a reasonable distance of railway that uttered a word of complaint, and now that the Southwestern is being pushed forward and the M. & N. W. R. extended 50 miles during the present season, a great deal will be accomplished to obviate the difficulty of long and tedious journeys, and very soon this fertile country will astonish the eastern provinces by the exports of grain, stock, butter, cheese and pork, the quality of all products being unsurpassed. I intend leaving for Virden by rail on Monday next, for a change after driving with one team 550 miles in ten days, which says much for the ease of travel through a new country.

Yours very truly,

JOHN OGILVIE,
Miller.

The EDITH and LORNE PIERCE
COLLECTION of CANADIANA



Queen's University at Kingston

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